

and the prejudice that I think motivates this amendment? Because it is not reasoned judgment. In fact, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States was to be conducting a 45-day thorough investigation. Then we would be able to make an informed decision. At the end of that investigation they were going to make recommendations.

But the reality is there aren't a whole lot of things that need to be changed with this transaction. It is a financial transaction. U.S. longshoremen still handle the cargo. The U.S. Coast Guard provides physical security. The Customs Service inspects the cargo.

In fact, it was the UAE who was first, right away, to sign the U.S. Container Security Initiative. We asked them to. They are doing everything. And, my friends, the Director of the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Chertoff, said if this deal goes through, it will make our ports more secure, not less.

Listen to the experts.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I am doing this in no small part because I have been looking for an accurate description of "holy pictures" for some time now since I have been dealing with my friend from Wisconsin, and in this process we are going through today, I think I may have found at least one snapshot.

What we have done in this bill is attempt to respond to a very serious concern on the part of the American public regarding having a country or an organization that is related to a country in the Middle East having authority or control over any of our ports in this country. It is viewed by many as a serious national security issue, and this is a national security bill.

Our goal is to make certain that we have thought through this Dubai Ports World deal very carefully before moving forward. The language is to stop that deal. It is rather straightforward. The 62-2 vote in the committee indicates the broad cross-section of public reaction reflected in the membership to going forward without some action on the part of the committee, and thus this language in the bill. It is rather straightforward.

I welcome this discussion today, and intend to be as helpful as I can to those opposing our language.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Let me paraphrase the words that Mr. OBEY said a few minutes ago. Rather than holy pictures, I would say this provision of the bill is a little bit like sprinkling holy water over the issue. It has no effect.

Dubai has already announced that they are going to sell their interests.

The deal already went through. There is no effect of this provision in actually blocking the sale. This is making everybody feel good, that they can thump their chest and say we are doing something really tough here.

There are three good arguments, Mr. Chairman, as to why we should not be doing this.

First, it diverts our attention from the real issue. The real issue, is we don't have good port security.

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In fact, our port security is terrible. It is very poor. This diverts us from really dealing with the issue that we do not inspect more than 2 percent of all containers. We do not really have a system for tracking containers and we do not know the origin of these containers. Containers start in one place in Malaysia and go to Singapore and then go to Vancouver, and then by train to Chicago. We have no idea where it originated and what might have been put into the container.

We do not have the information. We have bad port security. And Congress has a responsibility for the oversight and to make sure that the Department of Homeland Security is doing the job it should be doing.

This diverts our attention from this issue and, allows everybody to feel good about what they are doing. It has no effect, none, on port security, or on the security of the United States.

The second reason why this is bad, it is damaging, as has been indicated by the gentleman from Virginia, it is damaging to our relationship with the United Arab Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates, Dubai, is the largest port in the world outside of the United States for U.S. warships. This last year 56 warships docked in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, the same port that is managed by this company, and 590 supply vessels. All supplies that go to Iraq go through this port.

Now we are inviting trouble. If Dubai decides that they want to retaliate against the United States, we will be up a creek without a paddle when it comes to getting our supplies into Iraq.

And then, the third reason, it sends the wrong signal to investors around the world. It says to investors around the world that we are not really a reliable trading partner or a reliable investment partner. It says to them, that, the United States has rules that they are supposed to follow, and then they throw them overboard.

This has been confirmed to me in at least one email that I have received from somebody who is an investor in Singapore. It said that many of his clients are reconsidering some of their investments in the United States, investments that create jobs for American workers in this country, because we do not have a reliable policy.

This is good politics but bad policy, and this provision should be removed from the bill.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 4939. I will be supporting the Supplemental Appropriations Act so our Armed Forces who are so bravely working to rebuild Iraq and fight the global war on terror have all of the tools and equipment they need to be successful.

My support comes, however, with a great deal of consternation. Because in this voting for this legislation I will also be forced to support unrelated spending for the rebuilding of the gulf coast.

Let me be clear. I believe that we need to help those devastated by Katrina. I have been there twice. But we must do it in a responsible manner with a clear understanding of where and how the money is spent.

It is clear that we must sustain military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, continuing making progress and tracking down and bringing terrorists to justice and procure the necessary equipment for our troops to carry out their mission.

It is unclear to me, however, why we must couple this funding with gulf coast relief funds. Both are worthy causes, but in my view the spending for the latter is in desperate need for further oversight and explanation.

For instance, we should be taking a closer look at the \$9.6 billion included for FEMA's problematic Disaster Relief Fund and the \$4.2 billion included for community development block grants, which are not even required to go to the gulf coast areas. These funds should not be incorporated into a bill with those for our military force protection needs, including up-armored Humvees, Abram tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles.

Congress has already allocated \$62.3 billion to hurricane relief and recovery. I believe that it is Congress' responsibility to demand a strict accounting of how these dollars are spent, and any further funds allocated to the gulf coast for hurricane relief should be offset with other savings.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GINGREY. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. We are on the amendment dealing with the Dubai Ports. Does the gentleman know that?

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I did not know that. I apologize.

Mr. LEWIS of California. I thought that is why you were asking to speak. But that is okay. Just go right ahead.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I will go ahead and complete. I do apologize for that. I was not aware of that.

But I think it is important, in conclusion, that we work toward rebuilding and restoring normalcy for those who are affected by Katrina. However,